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COPY

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS

FAR EAST COMMAND

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

2 February 1952.

Dear Bedell:

This letter is prompted as a result of two recent studies made within my headquarters. One study consisted of an analysis of the effectiveness of all of the clandestine collection agencies operating within the Far East; and the other study consisted of an analysis of the responsibilities for the clandestine collection of information as defined in NSCID Nbr 5, and the various amendments and proposed revisions which have been under study in Washington.

The lack of current and valid intelligence in the entire Far Eastern area presents a problem which, in an expanded war situation, could have the most serious consequences. The intelligence program in the Far East is, in my opinion, in urgent need of remedial action to insure that a reasonable flow of current military intelligence will afford the United States and the Far East Command a more accurate and more up-to-date intelligence picture of the entire area.

A critical survey of the existing situation reveals that current intelligence is utterly lacking in Soviet Siberia, large parts of China, and even in 75% of North Korea, particularly along the Yalu River and in the northeastern part of the peninsula. The overall collection effort lacks objectivity, and suffers from the absence of military direction and from the apparent failure to have - or follow - a centralized collection plan.

In order to meet our intelligence responsibilities in the Far East, it appears logical that the primary targets of our collection effort, in order of priority, should be as follows:

1. Chinese Communist Armed Forces
2. Soviet Armed Forces
3. North Korean Armed Forces
4. Various dissident Communist forces, such as the Japan Communist Party.

At present, the information from clandestine sources on the above forces is sketchy, vague, or non-existent. Little or no first-hand information is now being received from the critical areas

Original incoming letter from Gen. Ridgway in Liaison Reg.

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Army review(s) completed.

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of Manchuria, northeast China, and southeast Siberia; and the information which does filter through is of the rumor type, or is general knowledge coupled with some known facts or speculation. Evaluation of the information is usually arbitrarily placed upon the report with little or no attempt to properly evaluate by comparison with existing intelligence. As a result, the reports are frequently erroneous or misleading.

The intelligence situation with respect to geographic areas is as follows:

1. Communist China. With few exceptions, reports dealing with China contain only second or third-hand information which is obtained either in Taiwan or Hong Kong. The bulk of the information received from CIA is similar, if not identical, to the information received from U. S. military officials in Taiwan or Hong Kong, as well as from Chinese Nationalist and [redacted] Intelligence agencies. Reports from CIA consequently serve to cover areas which are already covered by other intelligence nets, and moreover, duplicate rather than substantiate the information received from these agencies. 25X1

2. Soviet Siberia, Sakhalin, and the Kuriles. Covert intelligence is virtually non-existent. Intelligence on the Soviet armed forces is old (having been obtained from Japanese repatriated prisoners of war), speculative, rumor, and third or fourth-hand information. Except for bits of information gathered by chance from the interrogation of the crews of Japanese fishing boats which have been interned by the Soviets, the Far East Command is receiving no timely or reliable information concerning the Soviet areas of Asia.

The need for immediate and drastic action to secure a continuous flow of critical intelligence is assuming more serious aspects with the possibility of a military armistice in Korea. If, and when, an armistice becomes effective, the most lucrative sources of information - prisoners of war, documents, and aerial reconnaissance - will no longer be available. The entire responsibility for intelligence information will rest with clandestine collection agencies.

This portion of the world has become an active military area, and will continue to be one for the foreseeable future. This development has been particularly acute during the past two years. For this reason, it is highly important that our primary object in

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The Far East be military intelligence rather than political and economic intelligence. To obtain the desired objectivity in approaching the problem it is necessary that the CIA staff in this area be composed of a substantial number of military personnel with the requisite experience and vigor.

I hold the view that, in general, officers of the active list of the armed forces are the only ones who possess the required background in command and staff experience, and the ones most likely also to possess the equally essential traits of physical and spiritual stamina and vitality. Although it is possible that there are officers on the retired and inactive lists of the services who meet the aforementioned requirements, their interest in the project and appreciation of the responsibilities are essentially less positive. I consider that a young brigadier general or admiral - who is on the upgrade - could provide the vitality which is expected of the senior officer in such an organization. A military man is necessary in order that he may have competent military members of his staff to assist him. Although I recognize the fact that the civilian and military elements of the CIA must be balanced according to the situation, this portion of the world requires military objectivity.

With the high degree of confidence that [redacted] has built up in all of us here, in turn resulting in the most effective mutual cooperation, it would be my hope that your judgment and [redacted] interests might permit him to remain on this duty until such time as a young active brigadier or admiral could be made available as suggested above. 25X1 25X1

In any proposal of this nature, the interplay of personalities will largely determine its acceptance or rejection. I think this is particularly applicable in this case; and so, if the proposal is generally acceptable to you, I would suggest the possible need of your strong personal hand in the supervision of its execution. Otherwise, even though approved, it is quite conceivable that it could be rendered ineffective in the process of implementation.

With warmest regards,

Faithfully,

/s/ MATT

M. B. Ridgway,
General, United States Army.

General Walter Bedell Smith
Central Intelligence Agency

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